

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) Folding machine to fold a web material along transverse folding lines, comprising at least one folding roller provided with at least one mechanical gripping member to mechanically grasp the web material along a folding line; and a gaseous flow member, associated with said at least one gripping member, and constructed and arranged to generate a gaseous flow which inserts the web material into said at least one mechanical gripping member in absence of a folding blade, said mechanical gripping member being constructed and arranged to grasp the web material inserted therein by said gaseous flow.

2. (Previously Presented) Machine according to claim 1, wherein said gaseous flow member is a suction member to draw the web material towards said at least one gripping member.

3. (Previously Presented) Machine as claimed in claim 1 or 2, further comprising two counter-rotating folding rollers with parallel axes, each of said counter-rotating folding rollers being provided with at least one gripping member.

4. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 2, wherein each said suction member is associated with a device to activate and deactivate suction as a

function of an angular position of a respective folding roller of said at least one folding roller, the suction member associated with each said respective folding roller being active for a fraction of a complete turn of the respective folding roller.

5. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 2, wherein said at least one gripping member comprises a movable element cooperating with a first stop, the web material being sucked by said suction member between said movable element and said stop.

6. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 5, wherein said movable element cooperates with a second stop, said first stop and said second stop defining a slit essentially parallel to an axis of rotation of a respective folding roller of said at least one folding roller, the movable element extending in said slit.

7. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 3, wherein each of said at least one folding roller comprises at least one cavity substantially parallel to an axis of rotation and opens on a cylindrical surface of the folding roller, inside which a respective gripping member is housed, and wherein a suction duct terminates in said cavity.

8. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 7, wherein each of said at least one cavity is provided with means to limit effect of suction on one side of a movable element associated with said at least one gripping member, between the movable element and said first stop.

9. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 8, wherein a first block defining said first stop is fixed in said cavity.

10. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 6, wherein a second block defining said second stop is fixed in said cavity.

11. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 9, wherein said first block delimits a suction compartment in connection with said suction duct and is provided with a plurality of suction holes distributed along a longitudinal extension of said first block and terminating on a surface of said first block positioned on an opposite side with respect to said suction compartment and facing the movable element.

12. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 11, wherein said movable element is supported by a shaft oscillating around its longitudinal axis, supported in said cavity, and wherein said first block has a sealing surface cooperating with said oscillating shaft, said holes

terminating between the first stop defined by said first block and said sealing surface.

13. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 12, wherein each of said at least one gripping member includes an elastic strip.

14. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 13, wherein said elastic strip is integral with said oscillating shaft and cooperates with said first stop.

15. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 3, wherein each of said counter-rotating folding rollers is associated with a sliding block with a communication channel between a suction line and a suction duct in a respective folding roller of said at least one folding roller, said sliding block resting on a sliding surface of the respective folding roller.

16. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sliding surface is disposed on a front surface of the respective folding roller on which said suction duct terminates.

17. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sliding block is resiliently pushed against said sliding surface.

18. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sliding block has an elongated aperture communicating with the respective folding roller.

19. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 4, wherein each said device to activate and deactivate suction is adjustable, to adjust positions in which suction is opened and closed as a function of the angular position of the respective folding roller.

20. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 15, wherein said sliding block is disposed in a specific angular position adjustable with respect to the respective folding roller.

21. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 20, wherein said sliding block is engaged with a flange coaxial to the respective folding roller, the angular position of which around the axis of the folding roller is adjustable.

22. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a cutting unit that cuts the web material into single sheets, which are folded by said folding roller, is associated with said folding roller.

23. (Previously Presented) Folding machine as claimed in claim 22, wherein said cutting unit has two counter-rotating cylinders with axes parallel to each other and to the folding roller, which define between them a nip through which the web material is fed, and provided with blades and counter-blades to cut the web material, and wherein one of said two counter-rotating cylinders forming

the cutting unit forms with the folding roller a nip through which the cut web material is fed.

24. (Currently Amended) Folding machine to fold a web material along transverse folding lines, comprising at least one folding roller provided with at least one mechanical gripping member to mechanically grasp the web material along a folding line; and a gaseous flow member, associated with said at least one gripping member, and constructed and arranged to generate a gaseous flow which inserts the web material into said at least one mechanical gripping member in absence of a folding blade, said mechanical gripping member being constructed and arranged to grasp the web material inserted therein by said gaseous flow, wherein said at least one folding roller cooperates with a counter-roller, on which a projection is provided extending parallel to the axis of said rollers, the position of said projection being synchronized with respect to the position of said gripping member, to facilitate pick-up of said web material by suction.

25. (Currently Amended) Folding machine[[,]] to fold a web material along transverse folding lines, comprising at least one folding roller provided with at least one mechanical gripping member to mechanically grasp the web material along a folding line; and a gaseous flow member, associated with said at least one gripping member, and

constructed and arranged to generate a gaseous flow which inserts the web material into said at least one mechanical gripping member in absence of a folding blade, said mechanical gripping member being constructed and arranged to grasp the web material inserted therein by said gaseous flow, wherein said at least one folding roller cooperates with a counter-roller, on which a projection is provided extending parallel to the axis of said rollers, the position of said projection being synchronized with respect to the position of said gripping member, to facilitate pick-up of said web material by suction, and wherein a corresponding projection is provided on each of said at least one folding roller, each projection of one of said at least one folding roller cooperating with a gripping member of the opposite folding roller.

26. (Withdrawn) Folding machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said gaseous flow member includes an air ejection member to push the web material inside said at least one gripping member.

27. (Withdrawn) Folding machine as claimed in claim 26, wherein on each said at least one folding roller an air ejection member and a gripping member are provided, arranged on diametrically opposed positions.

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28. (Withdrawn) Folding machine as claimed in claim 26, wherein said gaseous flow member includes at least one air nozzle.

29. (Withdrawn) Folding machine as claimed in claim 28, wherein said at least one air nozzle is a linear nozzle extending parallel to the axis of the at least one folding roller.

Claims 30-40 (Canceled).